

Gedurende hierdie LockDown het ek 'n klomp ou Trip Reporte ge lees, en 'n klompie juwele herbesoek. Hierdie een is baie spesiaal vir my want dit was my eerste ervaring op grondpad....

Vroeg 2004 het ek 'n ex-verkeerpolisie 1988 R80RT gekoop en van niks af leer ry. In April 2005 het ek die ABBG (Annual BMW Bikers Gathering) te Oudtshoorn bygewoon. Groot opwinding vir my want dit was die eerste langafstand toer per motorfiets wat ek gedoen het.

Hier is die storie wat ek in 2005 geskryf en destyds op ons BMWCCC forum geplaas het

To The Hell and Back - on the wrong equipment

Submitted by GeelKameel on 2005-04-29



ABBG (Annual BMW Bikers Gathering) Oudtshoorn 2005

Have you ever tried to open canned food using a screwdriver? Well at one stage I thought this is exactly what I tried to do.

During the Saturday excursions at the 2005 ABBG, I covered much more distance on dirt roads than I had planned for (about 40km, first dirt riding ever...). In fact, I did not plan to do any off-road distance! That evening, with the assistance of a whiskey, I looked at the route guide and decided the Gamkaskloof should be interesting. Besides, the level of skill was indicated as

two helmets - smooth gravel roads. Ah, not too difficult, I've done smooth gravel roads before! (al was dit net 40km!)

Sunday morning at eight I pulled up at the gathering point. Only one bike (1150 GS) and a very professional looking rider was there.

"Is this the gathering point for Gamkas Kloof?", I asked.

Very friendly affirmative answer. As I pulled up behind his bike. I noticed his face became bit expressionless.

Silence, for a short while.

"Are you going to Gamkaskloof?" he asked (friendly, but serious and looking at my 1988 R80RT with this foreign ex traffic police fairing).

"Yes", I replied.

Silence. A far-away look.

Oh my goodness, what does this mean? The silence lasted until the next bike pulled up. Another beautiful GS.

After a while, seven GS bikes and one R80RT roared off. The first stop was at the cafe for victuals (there was none to buy in the kloof) and lowering tyre pressure (strange thing to do, I thought to myself).

I bought a can of Coke, a nice packet of Lemon Creams and a roll of Mentos sweets. Into the pannier went the "lunch" and off we went.

Earlier I mentioned to the tour leader that I would follow the rest and that he should not worry about me. OK, no problem. In any case, the group does wait at each turn-off until all are there.

I was all smiles as the group turned into the Gamkaskloof road.

“Expect three small driffies with bit of water. And remember to keep to low gears and use the back brake. Make sure your speed remains under control”.

Sound advice from an experienced rider, I planned to do just that.

Gradually I realised that this smooth gravel road has these nasty furrows running across it. Not deep or wide, but very bumpy to an R80RT. Loose sand was bit unnerving, but the R80 stayed upright. Cornering was no problem because my speed was (very) low and (very) controlled.

First driffie was two small puddles. Ah, this is easy, I thought.

Next driffie. Going around a sharp downhill corner, a wide stretch of water was right in front of me. Five metres away. Loose sand. Gravel. Too fast.

Back brake, rear slides out. Stop braking!

Reflex front brake, front slides.

Recover quickly (fortunately!).

No more space. Give gas.

Aim for the centre (where I can see the stones).

Bike hits the water. Spray all over. Wheel hits a stone, jumps into the track side (where I cannot see the stones).

More spray, more stones. Suddenly, in a flash, I was through.

Relief turned into **oh-no!** when the engine spluttered to a halt. The other guys are far ahead, long gone. Now this! Handkerchief, blow, wipe, wait. Save your battery - pushing over this little uphill is not possible. Ten minutes later and the beast lives again, ready for the big chase.

By now I was sort off well trained in off-roading. The next driffie was no problem. The rough surface, loose gravel, R80 and I were getting along quite well. I was quite happy to have seen off all three driffies.

Approaching some trees, I saw my group parked. The next thing I saw was this (fourth!) drif. Wide water and a rider behind a camera on the other side, waiting for the show!

But this time I was ready. Slow entry, increase gas slowly and aim accurately. Accurately lasted two metres. Then the R80 took over and I had to follow. Fortunately, the R80 knew where he was going and took me through safely.



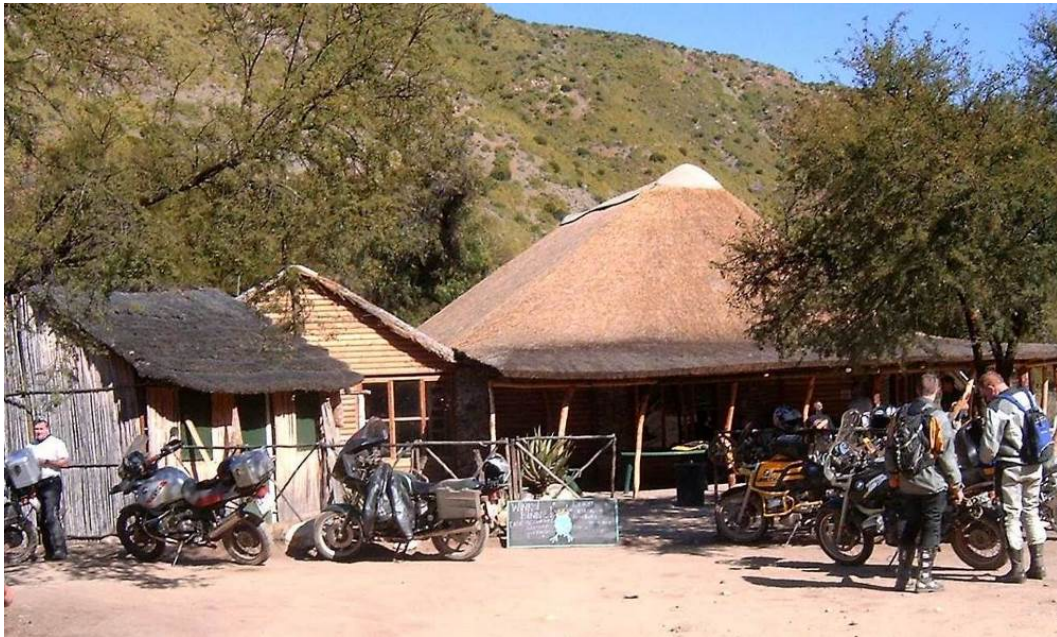
The descent into the Kloof was beautiful, exciting, challenging and very much slower than the GS riders. The R80 did not put a foot wrong. Very bumpy, but that I had accepted by now.



Reaching the kiosk some time (twenty minutes?) after the group, I could not fail to but see a very relieved leader!

The most difficult part of the entire excursion was the last 100meters near the kiosk. Loose, round river stones (size ranging from tennis balls to ostrich eggs) played havoc with the ol' RT. The bike jumped randomly to the left or right - I couldn't tell beforehand. Then, landing wherever, I could not

regain enough control soon enough to take another line. I just have to follow the bike and stay upright. I got through, but used the full width of the road as well as some space reserved for bushes.



I opened my pannier to have something to eat and drink.

Surprise! The Lemon Creams were non-existent. Packet flat as an envelope. Crushed, and spread right through the inside, was this brownish powder. Aided by the cream filling, everything looked like Kentucky chicken, covered with powder. The Mentos were not all there anymore. Some were crushed, others covered in powder. The Coke survived, but the printing on the can was very faded and dented.

At some point the leader walked over to me, and said "You could do well with a GS..."

Hmmm, I will keep that in mind!



The way out was most enjoyable. No drama and lots of confidence.

The late lunch in Prins Albert was very pleasant.

The paved road through Meiringspoort back to Oudtshoorn was a welcome relief.

A dusty, tired and happy R80RT back at Kleinplasie!



In retrospect:

Going into the Gamkaskloof with the RT was a very exciting. I learnt more about biking in two hours than I could ever have imagined. Two principle reasons why the RT is not suitable for off-roading came through very clearly.

Firstly, the suspension is too stiff and the stroke too short for the rough surface. The tyres do not stay in contact with the road surface as much as required. Wrong tread as well.

Secondly, you cannot stand.

This reduces your control over the bike so much that it could become dangerous very quickly, especially over bumpy surfaces.

Another problem was that the fairing and windscreen was bit high. Dust and water splashes reduced visibility through the windscreen, impairing the very important near-field vision directly in front of the bike.

So, now that I can calmly reflect on a most enjoyable ABBG 2005, I think I need a GS.
Yes, I need a GS!!

ABBG Oudtshoorn
2005